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ABSTRACT

The goal of this unit is to increase student awareness of current issues regarding relations between the United States and Japan. Eleven activities are designed to increase cultural awareness. The unit is introduced by discussing the reasons for study of other nations for multicultural understanding. Students complete a questionnaire concerning their perceptions of Japan and categorize the answers to find common perceptions about Japan. To learn more facts about Japan, students engage in research activities using periodicals; both to learn about Japan and to analyze the way in which the U.S. media presents U.S.-Japan relations. The research findings are presented to the class and also analyzed from the perspective of the Japanese to enhance understanding of the problems blocking better understanding between the two nations. To understand the Japanese perspective, the students complete a questionnaire from the Japanese viewpoint, analyze their research findings from the Japanese perspective, and analyze U.S. information sources from the Japanese viewpoint. The culminating activity is to discuss the information that has been gathered and discuss the results of an examination taken by the class. Appendices include: (1) assignments; (2) list of sources; (3) a summary of answers given by Japanese; and (4) important issues in U.S.-Japan relations. (SM)

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UNITED STATES -- JAPAN RELATIONS

an instructional unit for
High School Social Studies classes

Contemporary Issues
Global Studies
Government
Foreign Policy
Economics
Asia Studies
and others

by

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To the teacher:

Brief description of this unit:

The purpose of the unit is to make students aware of the specific issues currently important in relations between the United States and Japan. A broader goal is to develop the awareness that sources of information available in this country naturally concentrate on the American point of view, and the related awareness that it is important also to recognize points of view commonly held in other nations, if we are to build an effective foreign policy.

The unit is divided into the following Activities:

A. Class discussion, to elicit the point that it is important for Americans to learn about other nations

B. Completing a short questionnaire, to quickly determine knowledge and feelings about Japan among the students in the class

C. Classifying the information reported on the questionnaire, to determine the feelings of the class in general

D. Finding resources and reading about current U.S.--Japan relations, to gather information on the topic

E. Reporting on the information gathered and subsequent class discussion

F. Completing a short questionnaire, to try to imagine how Japanese would respond

G. Further class analysis of reports from Activity E, this time from the Japanese point of view

H. Individual analysis, to consider Japanese perceptions of American information sources

I. Group discussion of information gathered in Activity H, to summarize what has been learned in preparation for an examination

J. Completing an examination

K. Wrap-up, to discuss examination results, what has been learned, and how relations between the two nations might be improved

Appendix I Assignment to use in Activity D

Appendix II List of sources on United States--Japan relations

Appendix III Responses for use with Activity F

Appendix IV Issues important in U.S.--Japan relations and the Japanese point of view (June 1987)

Objectives of the unit:

1. To develop an awareness that United States publications discuss relations between the U.S. and other nations from the U.S. point of view

2. To gain the understanding that development of an effective foreign policy requires knowledge that people in different nations perceive issues differently

3. To develop knowledge about the most important issues that currently cause disharmony in U.S.--Japan relations

4. To absorb and understand information presented in oral reports and class discussions

Time required for the unit

This unit has been designed for approximately ten days of class time. This may be modified, depending upon the level of preparation of the students, the amount of interest they show and the amount of time available. The time required for each Activity in this unit has not been indicated; the teacher can plan on the basis of the variables suggested above. Many of the activities take less than one class period. Also, of course, it is possible to use parts of this unit without using the entire unit.

Suggested time line:

Day I -- Activities A and B (and possibly C)
Day II -- Activities C and D (or D)
Day III -- Completion of Activity D
Day IV -- Activities E and F
Day V -- Activity G and beginning of Activity H
Day VI -- Completion of Activity H
Day VII -- Activity I and preparation for Activity J
Day VIII -- Activity J
Day IX -- Activity K

(You may want to use yet another day for Activity D, especially if you show a film (see p. 7). You also may want an extra day before Activity J, an exam, to allow for student preparation, or after Activity J, so you can finish grading the exams before proceeding to wrap up the unit (Activity K.) Showing audio-visual materials would be appropriate during these extra days.

For a shorter version of the unit, use only activities D, E, G, H and I.

Revising the Unit

The subject matter of this unit changes very quickly, so the unit is designed to be used with library resources rather than text materials. It can be adapted to deal with American relations with any other foreign nation, though I suggest that Japan is a particularly important nation to study in this way.

Please send me any suggestions you have for revision of this unit.

Activity A: A series of questions for the teacher to ask the class is suggested here. Its purpose is to lead students to accept the proposition that it is important to study (and begin to understand) foreign nations and foreign policy. Guide the discussion so that students will think about why individuals should know about foreign relations.

Ask the members of the class the following questions.

1. Is it more important to study the United States or to study other nations?

Regardless of the answer, follow with:

2. Why?

Ask this question to a number of students. If most of the answers to these first two questions indicate the importance of studying other nations, you are ready for Question 4. If (as might occur in a class in the United States) most of the answers indicate that study should emphasize the United States, continue with:

3. Are there any reasons for studying other nations, then?

Some of the students will indicate interest in other nations, or in certain specific nations. Make sure various reasons for studying other nations emerge. If necessary, prompt the class toward a response indicating that our nation could benefit if more Americans studied other nations. Lead the discussion in the direction of:

4. Are foreign relations important to the United States? (or) Are relations between the United States and other nations important?

The answers should include comments like "Yes, in order to prevent war," and "Yes, in order to increase prosperity, through world trade." As you respond to the answers, reinforce the idea that increasing knowledge of other nations is important for the self-interest of the United States, whether or not people happen to be interested in foreign nations or cultures for other reasons. Continue with:

5. Let's look at United States foreign policy, then. "Foreign policy" can be defined as the U. S. government's official goals involving relations with other countries. Assuming that most of you don't know very much about American foreign policy, can you tell me whether it has always been successful in recent years? Have there been any policy failures?

The answers may include various examples the students consider "successes." Early in the discussion, establish the point that policy goals must be defined before success or failure can be assessed. Then discuss and list on the board the broad policy goals that students identify (national security, world peace, national prosperity, etc.) Next consider policy successes and failures. Make sure the discussion does pinpoint some events that indicate at least partial failure (for example, the 444 day captivity of United States Embassy personnel in Iran, 1979-81.) Indicate that regardless of whether our foreign policy has been generally successful or not, you are interested in developing greater success. Ask the students if they would agree that having a more successful American foreign policy would be a worthwhile goal. Assuming that the answer is "Yes," (whether or not the students have exhibited much interest in the question) continue to the focus of the unit.

The Focus of this Unit of Study

Announce to the class students that they will be studying relations between the United States and Japan. Tell them you've decided what country will be used as a focus for this unit rather than letting them help decide, because they are now State Department employees (you may need to explain the role of the State Department) whose job is studying how to improve relations between the U.S. and other countries, and that they, as a group, have just been assigned to look into how we can improve relations with Japan. Role play: "Now, as your boss, I know that some of you would rather study the U.S.S.R. or Iceland or Barbados, but we've been handed the task of looking at our relations with Japan. Anyone know what they are? Anyone know why the Administration is concerned?" (Use this question to bring out the importance of Japan.)

If there are answers, suggest the class try to categorize them and develop a list or informal outline on the board. The information your students provide will probably include something about trade, and the suggestion that relations between our two nations aren't bad but could be better. You are now ready for Activity B.

Activity B

Tell the students that the first task for them as invididuals is to find out how much knowledge there is about Japan and U.S.--Japan relations in this foreign policy planning group. Have each student, therefore, write the answers to the questions below. (The next step will be to divide the class into as many groups as there are questions, each group listing and summarizing the answers to one question.) If convenient, give each student five strips of paper, each one a different color, so the answers can be sorted quickly. Indicate which question is to be answered on each color. Then, either give each student the list of questions or show them the questions written on the board, but hidden under a map or chart until time to use them.

Make sure the students realize that you do not expect them to be experts on Japan yet. These questions, tell them, are designed to find out what an average group of people knows and thinks. A wise guy may suggest that foreign policy planners would be more informed than these questions suggest. You can answer: "But this planner has recently been working on policy regarding Brazil, and is not knowledgeable concerning Japan."

The questions

1. What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you think about Japan?
2. What do you think is the most important thing for Japanese to be aware of concerning America today?
3. What do you think is the most important thing for Americans to be aware of concerning Japan today?
4. Are there any American customs, attitudes, practices, etc. that you think are superior to comparable Japanese ones?
5. As far as you know, what is the current state of relations between the United States and Japan, and can you suggest any ways in which it might be improved?

Activity C

Divide the class into five groups, or ask the students to divide themselves. Each group will take the set of answers to one of the questions, categorize them and prepare an oral report that summarizes the information. If the answers are similar, you might suggest the group indicate what number or, better, percentage of the students gave what answers. Specify that each group has 10 minutes to complete the task and at the end of it a spokesman chosen by each group will very briefly report to the class the group's conclusions. If you have time, collect the information from each group and compile the results, making them available to the students.

Perhaps plan the groups so that poorer students work with the answers to Question 1.

For members of groups finishing early, you might have some materials about Japan available to look at. All the groups will probably complete their work quickly, however; there should be little waiting time.

When all the groups are ready, have the leader of each group present that group's report. You might ask for class comments, or comment briefly yourself on the reports. If the reports indicate lack of knowledge (and the report on Question 5 may very well do so) suggest this indicates the need for study, which is the next step in the unit.

(Collect and save the answers to the questions. You may want to read a few aloud during the wrap-up at the end of the unit, to demonstrate how much the students have learned.)

Activity D

Indicate to your group of foreign policy planners that now that the level of group knowledge is known, their next task is to locate information about current policy with Japan and what suggestions various experts have made for improving this policy. Give each student a copy of the assignment that appears in Appendix I.

The idea is to use the school library to find data, and, if it fits your curriculum, you might want to spend time reviewing use of the Readers' Guide and other library tools.

In beginning the assignment, you may need to ask questions like: Should we look in the card catalog? The vertical file? The reference room? The Reader's Guide?

List available reference guides on the board (individual Readers' Guide volumes, individual Facts on File volumes, etc.) Assign students to each reference guide, or give them a chance to choose which reference guide to check. For example, 2-3 students can use each Readers' guide volume, each locating a separate article to read. One student may be assigned to consult the librarian, volunteers to use nearby community or college library newspaper indexes, others to use vertical file material. Some students can consult encyclopedias or card catalog entries to find background material on Japan. (Some students may have surprising sources. One of mine brought in several English language newspapers published in Japan, obtained from an airline employee.) Try to have as many students as possible use up-do-date material.

Indicate before students begin looking for information how much class time they will have to look for data, and when the report based upon the data will be due. (This should be one to three days--as soon as is practical.) Specify a stiff penalty for late work, since the completed assignments will be needed for group work.

Make sure each student uses only one article, BUT A USEFUL ONE, at least until you are sure enough material exists for each student to find something.

Since this assignment is due very soon, some students may look for a short article. Indicate that students who have found a challenging article will be more apt to earn a high grade than students who have found a brief, simple article.

Because listing specific articles would outdate this unit much too quickly, they are not included here, but a list of specific useful references does appear in Appendix II. You may want to give copies of this list to your students. If your school library does not contain some of these sources, perhaps assign a student to "cover" that source at the community library, or in his parents' collection.

In addition to the sources listed in Appendix II, here are a few additional sources which may be useful for background information. These include two books, which have become classics of a sort.

Ruth Benedict, The Chrysanthemum and the Sword. Houghton Mifflin, 1946.

Edwin O. Reischauer, Japan: the Story of a Nation. Knopf, 1981. (This is a substantially rewritten version of his earlier work, Japan Past and Present. Either volume, whatever the publication date, is useful. Other useful books include almanacs, encyclopedias and yearbooks. Two particularly useful up-to-date references are New State of the World Atlas and Statesman's Year-Book.

To give students more homework time to compile their reports, you may want to show films or video tapes about Japan during class time.

SOURCES FOR FILMS AND VIDEO TAPES ABOUT JAPAN

Japan Society, Educational Department, 333 E. 47th Street, New York, NY 10017

Japan External Trade Organization, 1737 Post Street, San Francisco, CA 94401

After watching a film or video tape, you might briefly discuss what information in it can help the students with the current assignment.

Activity E

After the reports are prepared, students should rejoin their groups and each group should summarize the information from the individual reports to prepare one group report. Indicate that while the group report is being prepared, individual students should take notes about particularly significant aspects of U.S.--Japan relations (for personal use, with the unit exam in mind.) Each group's spokesman should report to the class what the group has learned from its research. Students should take notes from the different reports, to build up a collection of information. Also suggest that students ask any questions they may have. After all the group reports are given, initiate a discussion that results more or less in a group consensus on

1. The current state of relations between the two nations
2. The most crucial issue or issues between them
3. How to improve relations (students may feel they lack knowledge to answer this one well)

Activity F

Indicate to the students that now that they have identified issues of importance, the next question to consider is why our policy goals have not been totally realized. Why, in other words, can our government not control relations with Japan to our satisfaction? The obvious answer to this question--that the Japanese have something to say about this--will soon emerge in the discussion. Ask what the Japanese points of view are on the issues that have been identified. Do the Japanese perceive the issues in the same way Americans do? Tell the class, "Let's see if we can start thinking like Japanese," and have the students once again answer questions as in Activity B--but this time pretending they are Japanese. Pass out the questions, or write them on the board. Again give students a different colored slip of paper for each answer, and indicate which color to use for each answer. Here are the questions adapted to fit the new situation.

<u>The questions</u>

REMEMBER TO ANSWER EACH QUESTION AS THOUGH YOU WERE JAPANESE

1. What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you think about America?
2. What do you think is the most important thing for Americans to be aware of concerning Japan today?
3. What do you think is the most important thing for Japanese to be aware of concerning America today?
4. Are there any Japanese customs, attitudes, practices, etc. that you think are superior to comparable American ones?
5. As far as you know, what is the current state of relations between the United States and Japan, and can you suggest any ways in which it might be improved?

Student groups differ. Some may show a great deal of perception while doing this exercise. On the other hand, there may be much uneasiness. If students indicate that they simply do not know what the Japanese think about the United States, accept their statements, but ask whether anything they read, or heard reported on, gave them any knowledge that would help here. If much information has been generated in answer to these questions, have the answers summarized in groups, as before. If most students gave up, collect the papers and read aloud some answers that did emerge. Then read part or all of Appendix III to the class.

At this point, a brief discussion of the ways Japanese culture differs from American culture can be useful. What have the films shown about Japanese culture? As you discuss this, make sure the students realize the importance of getting beyond stereotypes--as some of the responses in Appendix III indicate.

Activity G

Now that the students are thinking about the Japanese point of view, return to the Activity E reports. Read aloud appropriate sections from the reports, asking students to respond whenever they hear a statement that a Japanese would challenge. (The answers to questions 1 and 4 should be especially useful to read.) Write on the board the statements your class feel would be challenged. Continue reading aloud answers from the student papers until five or more statements are written on the board. Then stimulate a brief discussion on the topic of whether the American media present the Japanese viewpoint. Is only the American viewpoint reflected? Should the media report the viewpoints of both nations, or, since they are geared to an American audience, should only the U.S. viewpoint be reported? During this discussion, it might be useful to refer to any films earlier seen. Ask the students whether the films presented a Japanese point of view accurately or adequately.

Whatever comments arise in this discussion, proceed to the next step.

Activity H

Assign students to look for Japanese viewpoints reported in the United States media, again using the list of sources in Appendix II. Warn the students that they may need to check a number of sources before finding Japanese points of view described. In all probability, some students will find Japanese viewpoints and some will not. Because of this, a good strategy for this Activity, if compatible with your grading system, is to give students extra credit if they find such information. (It may be good strategy to wait to announce that this assignment is only for extra credit until students start to become frustrated.) If you have blackboard space, have each student who finds a Japanese point of view briefly summarize it on the board, meanwhile bringing the reference to you. Keep the reference handy, with a marker indicating the specific comments, meanwhile giving the student appropriate credit in your gradebook (no papers to grade!) If students find references that make points very similar to ones already on the board, give credit and keep the reference without having additional material written on the board.

While the class is searching for Japanese viewpoints, you may have to offer suggestions and motivate students individually. Indicate that if they have trouble finding anything, this is because there is not much to find. (For example, in March 1987, President Reagan announced plans to place punitive tariffs on certain Japanese products in response to allegations of Japanese "dumping" of semi-conductors on world markets. Very few American publications related details of the Japanese viewpoint, however; they merely reported that Japanese officials denied the charge. One exception, U.S. News and World Report, presented an interview with a Japanese official, April 13, 1987, pp. 46-47.)

This assignment may cause student anxiety and frustration. It is the crux of the unit, however. Therefore, urge the students to persevere. Agree with them that their task is difficult. Also, you might point out that research for college papers, and even scholarly research, is often every bit as frustrating. Motivated students may go far afield, for example, to a college library, to find additional information. Encourage this.

See Appenedix IV for a discussion of United States--Japan issues, and Japanese responses to them, as of June 1987.

Activity I

When the time spent on Activity H is no longer productive, start a class discussion. Indicate to students that this discussion will serve two purposes:

1. to identify any current issues between the United States and Japan, clarify the viewpoints of the two nations and offer suggestions for solution.

2. to present information the students will need to know for the unit exam to be give the next day. (Urge the students, therefore, to take notes.)

Lead a discussion which does the above. Identify the issues, indicating both American and Japanese viewpoints, as well as any possible barriers to settlement of the issues. The culmination of the discussion should be the development of suggestions to improve relations.

If any time in the period remains, students could study individually or in groups for the exam. One suggestion is to pair the students, one in each pair taking the role of a Japanese policy maker and the other an American policy maker. Then they can discuss the issues with each other, to make sure they understand and remember important points.

Activity J

Examination. Three suggested examinations appear below and on the next pages: an essay exam, an objective exam and an analytical exam.

Essay Examination

Identify the issue or problem that in your opinion has caused the most friction in the field of United States--Japan relations recently. You may choose either to write about a broad, general issue or a very specific one. Use the class period to compose a clearly organized essay about this this problem. Make sure to incorporate specific examples and details in your essay. It should include the following:

1. Relevant historical background information
2. Japanese and American practices that contribute to the problem
3. Steps that Japan or the United States could take to help settle the issue--and reasons such steps have not already been taken

Objective Examination

(To the teacher: The questions suggested here are very general, in order to maintain their validity over a long time period. You could create a matching or multiple choice exam using specific facts, such as the name of the current Prime Minister of Japan. The more general questions do, however, acquaint students with basic principles concerning foreign relations.)

Examination

1. What is the main area of disagreement between the United States and Japan at present? (Answer in one or two sentences.)

2, 3 and 4. List 3 factors that help cause this disagreement.

5 and 6. List 2 steps the United States could take to help improve the situation. (Make sure the steps you suggest are practical, especially from a political point of view.) DO NOT MERELY REVERSE THE FACTORS YOU HAVE LISTED ALREADY.

7 and 8. List 2 steps Japan could take to help improve the situation. (Again, make sure these are practical.)

9 and 10. Identify and very briefly describe two other areas of disagreement between the two nations.

Analytical Examination

To the teacher: Prepare a copy of a short article, or a short section from a long article, which very obviously gives an American point of view. If you wish, use the "article" below, which has been written to express a blatantly American viewpoint, specifically for this exercise. (Note that this examination is difficult to evaluate. Students might find it an intriguing exercise, however.) Give each student a copy of the article, with the following directions:

Rewrite this article so that it is written neither from an American nor from a Japanese viewpoint. (You might pretend you are writing it for a magazine in Great Britain or some other nation.) Be specific, including detailed information you have learned in this unit. Your grade will depend partly on how many specific facts concerning the current trade situation you can use in your essay. Your facts must be accurate and they must apply to the situation under discussion.

In searching for ways to end the trade imbalance with Japan, American businessmen have indicated to Commerce Department representatives that they have done everything within their power to enter the Japanese market, but that the Japanese simply have so many barriers to prevent foreign manufactured goods from entering Japan that American companies are unable to penetrate Japan to any significant degree.

A U.S. newsman has stated, "This country is flooded with Japanese goods, while the Japanese are unwilling to buy much of anything American."

The problem is that the Japanese do not want to "buy American." To keep local markets available to Japanese products, American products, no matter their excellence, are given no chance in Japan. A Japanese conspiracy exists, government and industry leaders colluding to exclude foreigners from the Japanese market. We all know it is the American who can "build a better mousetrap," but the Japanese will not allow this mousetrap to be imported even if it is better.

The time has come for Congress and the President to retaliate by imposing tariffs on all Japanese products, so Japanese industry will be seriously hurt. Nothing else will work.

Activity K Wrap-up

A good time for the wrap-up discussion is the time the exams are returned to the students. In addition to comments directly related to the exams, a number of different ideas could be raised in the wrap-up. The most important is to discuss, as foreign policy planners, what actions might be taken to improve current relations. This is the culmination of the unit.

An additional approach is to base a discussion on the various American and Japanese practices the students suggested that are superior to practices in the other country. Discuss whether and how such practices might be adapted in the other nation.

Perhaps go back to the answers you have saved to the questions from Activity B, reading some of them aloud and asking for comments.

Now also might be a good time to bring up the point that the class was given no choice concerning which nation's relations with the United States would be studied. By now, some of the students should be well aware of the importance of Japan to the United States, and this point could be reinforced in this discussion.

Make sure that by now the class understands that different nations proceed from different assumptions, and that because of this it is easy for two nations who feel good will toward each other to develop misunderstandings.

Finally, make sure the class identifies specific factors that each nation needs to deal with if major problems are to be solved. For example, concerning trade, neither nation is merely a victim. The U.S. needs to solve its debt crisis to bring international trade back into line; Japan needs to open its markets further to avoid future economic problems.

Appendix I

Research Assignment: U.S.--Japan Relations

This assignment will be graded according to completeness, accuracy and depth of analysis.

Answer the following questions in relation to the specific article or other material that you find.

1. List bibliographic information about your source (or sources.) This includes author (if given), title of article, title of publication, date, publisher (if not a magazine or newspaper) and page.

2. What does the article tell you about the current state of relations between Japan and the United States? (Read the next few questions before answering this one.)

3. What American practices or attitudes does the article indicate might be a barrier to better relations?

4. What Japanese practices or attitudes does the article indicate might be a barrier to better relations?

5. What suggestions does the article make for improving relations?

6. What additional information about Japan that you think needs to be better known appears in the article?

Appendix II

LIST OF SOURCES ON UNITED STATES--JAPAN RELATIONS

PERIODICALS

* indexed in Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature

"Background Notes: Japan" (State Department publication)
*Business Week
Christian Science Monitor (an index is available)
*Current History
*"Department of State Bulletin"
Facts on File
"Gist" (a quick reference aid on U.S. foreign relations published by the State Department)
*Newsweek
*Time
*United States News and World Report

THE READERS' GUIDE WILL ALERT STUDENTS TO ARTICLES IN OTHER PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS.

The following sources will not ordinarily be available in the school library, but the community library may have them:

A daily newspaper that is indexed, such as the New York Times and/or the Wall Street Journal, in hard copy or on microfilm
*Forbes
*Foreign Affairs
*Fortune
*Nation's Business
*World Press Review

READERS' GUIDE SUBJECT HEADINGS TO CHECK

Investments, Japanese
Japan
Japan--Commercial Policy
Japan--Economic Conditions
Japan--Economic Policy
United States--Commerce--Japan
United States--Economic Relations--Japan
United States--Foreign Relations--Japan

VERTICAL FILE SUBJECT HEADINGS TO CHECK

Japan
United States--Foreign Relations--Asia
United States--Foreign Relations--Japan

(assorted State Department pamphlets, such as Current Policy Reprints, may be indexed in your library's vertical file)

Appendix III

1. Three Japanese high school girls answering the question (from an American) "What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you think about America?" responded: Disneyland, big, and Statue of Liberty.

2. Ten people in Japan in late 1986 answered the question "What do you think is the most important thing for Americans to be aware of concerning Japan today?" as follows:

A Japanese girl about age 20: Americans need to know that the Japanese are afraid of nuclear weapons and that nations coming together is the most important thing that there is.

A Japanese junior high school teacher: The most important thing to teach is the importance of the link between nations.

A prefectural (provincial) educational administrator in Japan: Japan is trying hard to build friendly relations. Increasing understanding of foreign cultures is important. Exchange between different countries, and communications, are important. We want foreign countries to increase their understanding of Japanese culture.

A Japanese schoolgirl: America has it all wrong about Japan. We don't wear kimono.

A Japanese high school principal: The true aspects of Japan. When traveling in Yugoslavia and Italy recently I saw out-of-date things being taught, like people in kimono, and the computers we use being very simple ones.

An educational administrator in Japan's national government: Deepening mutual understanding is very important. We want young people (in the rest of the world) to learn about Japan.

A young Japanese woman who lived abroad for some years during her childhood: Americans need to know why the Japanese character is what it is--why Japanese think like they do. Japan is an island nation, isolated from the rest of the world for a very long time.

An American, age 23, working in Japan: The stereotypes that Japanese hold about Americans, and that Americans hold about Japanese, are the most destructive thing between nations. They are the greatest barrier to understanding.

Another American working in Japan: Japanese have no concept of individuality. Everything is considered on a group basis.

An American businesswoman working in Japan: Japanese fear of the Soviet Union, and Japan's lack of resources, are the reasons Japan turns against policies Americans perceive as "moral" or "right" even though Japan is economically strong. Also, culturally, Japanese do not normally show anger, which many Americans perceive as being wishy-washy. Because of such differences, Americans misunderstand Japan.

Appendix IV

Issues important in U.S.--Japan relations (June 1987)

The relationship between the United States and Japan is strong and positive. No two nations will agree on everything, however, and it is important to make sure that disagreements do not lead to serious conflicts. Thus we should study areas of potential misunderstanding.

Economic issues have dominated U.S.--Japan relations in recent years. Japan, a nation strongly oriented towards the production of export goods, currently has an enormous trade surplus with the United States. This causes some American resentment towards Japan as, rightly or wrongly, Japan is blamed for the closing of American factories. Also, Japanese investors have begun investing their profits in the United States, leading some Americans to fear possible Japanese domination of the U.S. economy.

Relatively minor disagreements in two other areas, defense and fisheries, also occasionally disrupt relations between the two nations, but in recent years the only serious difficulties between the two nations have developed over economic issues.

Trade is a bone of contention between the United States and Japan mainly because of imbalance: the U.S. trade deficit with Japan was $2.8 billion in 1975, but by 1986 it had grown to $58.6 billion. In the single months of April 1987, Japan had a trade surplus with the U.S. of $5.15 billion. Many reasons have been cited for the imbalance.

Though the average American spends very little more on Japanese goods than the average Japanese spends on American goods, the larger American population and greater U.S. gross national product means a much greater dollar value of Japanese products in the U.S. than American products in Japan. Traditionally, Japan has been reluctant to open markets to foreign goods, and most American manufacturers have not made strong efforts to meet Japanese specifications for products. Because of the larger United States market, American manufacturers have generally geared their products to the domestic market, while Japan has been export-oriented.

The closed Japanese market has become a point of controversy between the two nations. The Japanese point out that their tariffs are among the world's lowest, but Americans cite numerous other restrictions that apply in the Japanese market. For example, Japan maintains barriers against food imports because farmers in Japan have strong political influence (under Japan's constitution, rural voters are overrepresented) but officials also argue it is necessary to assure that a local food supply will be available in times of national emergency. Thus an inefficient sector of the Japanese economy is protected by government policy. (However, Japanese figures show that 40% of the beef eaten in Japan is American.)

Some experts predict that Japanese markets newly open to imports in the future will not result in more U.S. imports, because other nations would also try to increase their market share. For example, South Korean and Taiwanese manufactured goods might undersell American items in Japan.

Various business practices cause misunderstanding. Americans charge that Japanese firms are overanxious to purchase parts and supplies from other Japanese firms rather than from American

firms. The Japanese counter that complicated, time-consuming U.S. export license procedures make it cost effective to look elsewhere for parts. When it comes to the American consumer market, Japanese manufacturers suggest that Americans buy Japanese products because of their superior quality. Moreover, when Japanese auto companies raised the prices of their cars sold in the United States by an average of about 15% in 1986, the American auto companies, instead of taking advantage of the new price differential, also raised prices.

In April 1987 President Ronald Reagan, who has always been a strong supporter of free trade, announced the imposition of punitive tariffs against a number of Japanese products, because the Japanese were not living up to an agreement made with the United States that semi-conductors (a key computer component) would no longer be "dumped" on the world market. "Dumping," or selling a product for less than its cost in order to drive competitors out of business, is illegal according to United States law. Japanese officials maintain that if dumping has occurred in third countries, it is by third parties (not controlled by Japanese firms) selling chips manufactured several years ago, and that new, tighter reins on shipping should prevent this in the future. Moreover, the Japanese argue, the anti-dumping agreement with the United States had only been made seven months before President Reagan took action, hardly long enough to institute the changes agreed upon. On June 8, the President lifted some of the tariffs.

A second part of the agreement called for Japan to begin importing American computer chips. Japanese officials say this has been difficult to implement in the short time since the agreement was made, because previous overproduction in Japan has saturated the local market. Officials also say the American market share has been growing, though Americans, citing different figures, say the opposite is true.

Neither of the two nations should blame the other for all its own economic ills. In recent years, for example, the American trade balance has been a problem with other nations too, including the European Community. Trade with Japan accounted for only one third of the 1986 United States trade deficit.

Recent agreements have led to a changing relationship between the American and Japanese currencies: the dollar is now much weaker in comparison to the Japanese yen than it used to be, but high American interest rates and the huge U.S. deficit, which will continue to affect trade, must be attacked by U.S. action. The change in currency values should benefit American products, as it makes them cheaper, while Japanese ones have become relatively expensive. Japanese firms have adapted to the stronger yen through raising productivity and allowing profit margins to drop. Thus Japanese sales in the U.S. have not dropped despite the change in the yen-dollar relationship.

Tension between these nations over trade policies is in part an inevitable result of contraction of the world's markets after years of growth. Each nation wants to sell its own products, and this naturally comes at the expense of the other nation.

A new concern has surfaced among Americans of late: Japanese investment in the United States is assuming very large proportions. For example, the electronics and auto parts industries, real estate and investment banking have recently received overtures from Japanese investors. The increase in Japanese investment has caused unease for

several reasons. There is fear that American technological expertise will in essence be purchased by Japanese money, and that too much decision making could pass into Japanese hands. When a Japanese firm, Fujitsu, Ltd., tried to buy Fairchild Semiconductor Corporation recently, the United States government blocked the purchase. Improving commercial relations between the two nations will not be easy. Political realities in both nations create a potent barrier. Unemployment in the United States creates pressures on politicians to adopt protectionist policies. Political demands have a similar influence in Japan.

Defense as an issue has not caused bad relations between the two countries, but it has led to disagreement. At the end of World War II, the United States not surprisingly wanted to assure that Japan could never again develop a strong military establishment. The Japanese themselves have generally wanted the same assurance, and written into their constitution is an article that prohibits the military budget from rising above 1% of the nation's gross national product. Forty years after the end of World War II, Japanese militarism does not appear to be a threat, and United States defense policymakers would like to see Japan take a stronger role in providing free world defense, because of her strategic location and because she seems to be getting a "free ride," with other nations (specifically the United States) contributing more than their share of mutual defense costs. At the very end of 1986 Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone announced that the military budget would rise to slightly more than 1%.

Other disagreements that could arise from time to time over defense issues might involve such things as American nuclear ships stopping at Japanese ports, and the American military presence in Japan. A possible future rift might develop over Japanese interest in designing and producing a new fighter airplane rather than purchasing an American-built one. This, of course, would also exascerbate the trade imbalance.

The fishing industry is much more important to Japan than to the United States, and Japanese fishing practices dominate Pacific fisheries to a degree that worries U.S. fishermen. For example, Japanese who fish in the Pacific ocean apparently catch many of the salmon spawned in American rivers. This leaves few salmon for U.S. fishermen, which contributes to economic hardship in Alaska's fishing communities. Moreover, Japanese and American fishing interests have long been rivals for fishing concessions in the waters of the many Pacific nations. Recently, the two nations have negotiated over the issue of opening Japanese markets for certain American-caught fish and fish products. A new agreement allows U.S. access.

Fishing issues thus cause occasional disputes which result in conferences and eventual amicable settlement.

Relations between Japan and the United States do, however, tend to be dominated by the trade issue to the virtual exclusion of other concerns. The trade problem influences American perceptions of Japan, often to the detriment of good relations between Americans and Japanese.